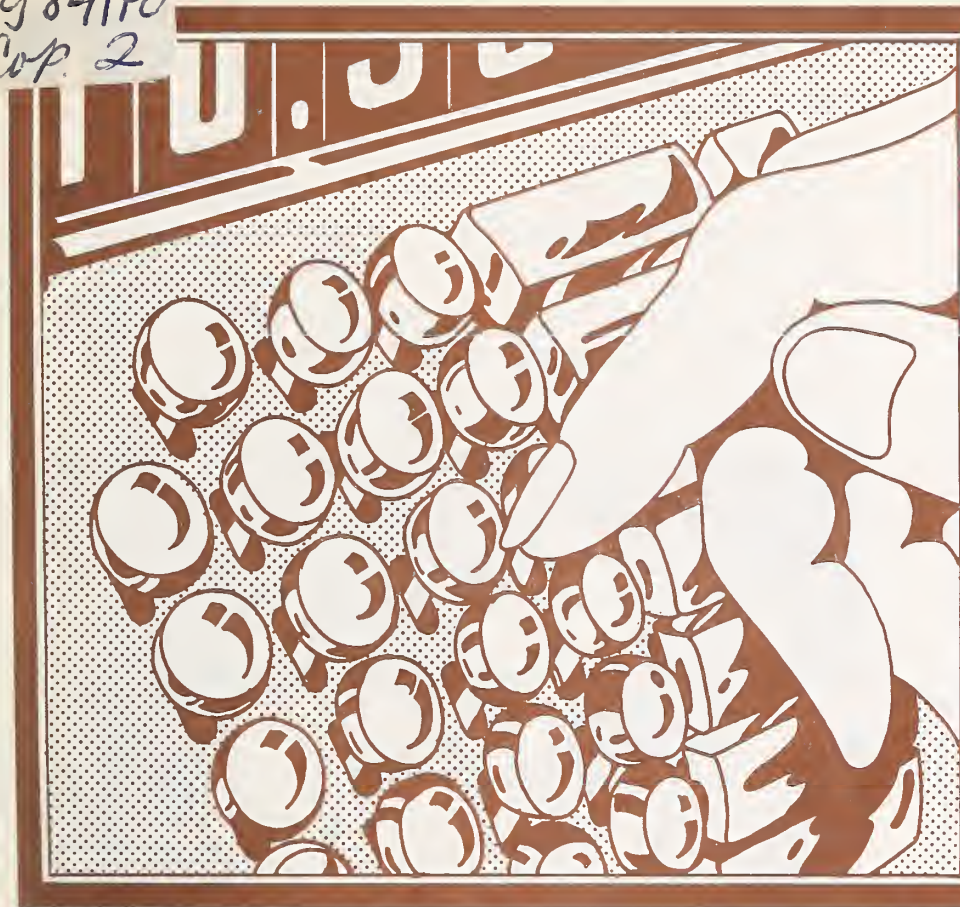


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# FOOD STAMP COUNTERPOINTS

## A MANUAL FOR CASHIERS

Checker-cashiers contribute to the efficient operation of the Food Stamp Program by observing program regulations and assisting food stamp customers. This manual explains some of the rules of program operation.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE  
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# THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

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The Food Stamp Program enables low-income families to buy more food of greater variety so that they can have better diets. In this way, it helps improve the health of the Nation's low-income families. By helping low-income families, the Food Stamp Program also benefits their communities and increases retail food sales because of the greater buying power of food stamp customers.

Food coupons are issued to households determined by public welfare agencies to be in need of food assistance. Food stamp participants buy some coupons and receive, in addition, bonus, or free, coupons. In this way, families use their coupons to increase their food purchases.

Only firms authorized by the Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, may accept food coupons. Authorized stores are issued a **nontransferable** authorization card. The authorization card is void if the ownership of the firm changes in any way or if the firm moves or is closed. Firms that do not have a valid authorization card should not accept food coupons.





## ELIGIBLE FOODS

Households can use food stamps to buy the following:

- Any food or food product for human consumption.
- Seeds and plants for use in a home garden to produce food for themselves.

Households may **not** use food stamps to buy:

- Alcoholic beverages and tobacco.
- Deposits on containers of eligible foods.
- "Lunch counter" items or prepared foods to be eaten on the premises.
- An exchange for cash.
- Any nonfood item (except seeds and plants).

Stores are required to post an Official Food List containing the above information. Refer to it often. It is vitally important that only eligible foods be sold for food coupons. Food stamp



families receive only enough coupons to purchase an adequate diet. The program is designed to leave each participating family cash to buy nonfood items. If food coupons are used for nonfood purchases, low-income families will continue to suffer from hunger and poor health.

## FOOD STAMP CUSTOMER IDENTIFICATION

Food stamp customers have been advised to tell checkers they are using food coupons when they reach the check-out counter. It is not necessary to request the customer to present his Food Stamp Identification Card before every purchase. However, if you have any reason to believe that a customer presenting coupons has no right to their possession, you should ask the customer to show his identification card.



## SEPARATE ELIGIBLE FOODS FROM INELIGIBLE ITEMS



Food stamp customers have been advised to separate eligible food items from the rest of the order. On occasion, it may be necessary for checkers to assist the customer in separating eligible from ineligible items prior to ringing up the sale. This will make it easier for the checker to total the coupon and cash amounts and will speed up the service to other customers in the check-out line.

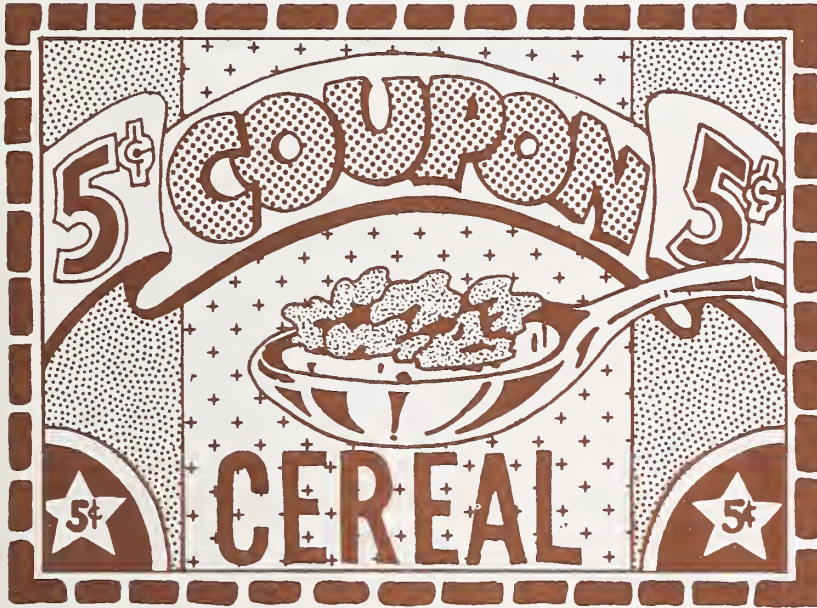


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## SALES TAX

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Food coupons may be accepted for payment of sales tax on eligible foods purchased with coupons—another reason for separating eligible items.



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## HANDLING “CENTS-OFF” COUPONS

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If a store accepts newspapers' and manufacturers' "cents-off" coupons from cash customers as a discount on food items, it must honor these coupons when presented by food stamp customers. However, cash refunds must not be given food stamp customers using "cents-off" coupons in connection with food stamp purchases. Merchants may either deduct the "cents-off" value from the total of the purchase before collecting for the sale, or offer the customer the option of trading out the value of the "cents-off" coupons for eligible foods, or receiving a credit slip for 99 cents or less, plus the appropriate number of \$1 coupons.

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## FOOD COUPON PAYMENT

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Coupons come in three denominations—brown \$1 coupons, purple \$5 coupons, and blue-green \$10 coupons. Purple \$5 coupons and blue-green \$10 coupons, whether loose or still attached to the coupon book, must be presented with the coupon book cover which bears the same serial number as the individual coupons. Brown \$1 coupons, however, are used as change and may be accepted loose **without** the matching coupon book. It is the recipient's right to tear the coupons from his book.



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## CHANGEMAKING

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For every \$1 of change due, give the customer a \$1 coupon that has NOT been canceled or endorsed. Always keep an ample supply of \$1 coupons on hand for change purposes.

Only \$1 coupons may be returned to the customer as change.

**For every \$1 of change due, give an unendorsed \$1 coupon.**

When the amount of change due is less than \$1, it is the **food stamp customer's option to:** (1) accept a credit slip for 99 cents or less, or (2) "trade out" for eligible foods, or (3) pay the store the difference in cash. No pressure should be put on the customer regarding which option he should select.

**For amounts less than \$1, give customer choice of: credit slip, trading out, or paying store in cash.**



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## REMEMBER

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### DO

- Refer to the Official Food List.
- Ask customers for Food Stamp Identification Card if necessary to prove their right to the coupons.
- Accept coupons only for eligible foods.
- Accept loose \$5 and \$10 coupons only if presented with the coupon book cover bearing the same serial number as the coupons.
- Give an unendorsed \$1 coupon for every \$1 of change due.
- If change is due, give customer choice of: credit slip, trading out, or paying store in cash.

### DON'T

- Accept coupons before authorization.
- Accept canceled or endorsed coupons, or coupons marked "specimen."
- Accept coupons for tobacco or alcoholic beverages or any nonfood items (except seeds and plants).
- Exchange cash for coupons.
- Give a credit slip for more than 99 cents in a single transaction.
- Give canceled or endorsed \$1 coupons as change.
- Accept coupons for payment on credit accounts.
- Give cash as change.
- Accept coupons for payment of bottle or other container deposits.

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